

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 043153

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, GR, US

SUBJECT: U.S. EXPRESSION OF CONCERN TO SENIOR GREEK
MILITARY

REF: ATHENS 512 AND 842

FOR AMBASSADOR TASCA

1. IN GENERALLY GLOOMY PICTURE PORTRAYED IN YOUR MESSAGES
"GREECE AFTER EUPHORIA" AND "THE MILITARY IN GREECE", THERE
ARE SEVERAL ASPECTS OF CURRENT SITUATION WHICH TROUBLE US
PARTICULARLY, I.E.

A. PREVAILING BELIEF THAT UNITED STATES WAS INVOLVED IN
NOVEMBER 25 COUP AND SUPPORTS PRESENT GOVERNMENT;

B. THE SEEMINGLY TOTAL LACK OF POPULAR SUPPORT FOR PRESENT
REGIME AND

C. THE CLOSE IDENTIFICATION OF THE GREEK ARMY WITH THIS
REGIME AND THE CONCOMITANT DISCREDITING OF THE GREEK
MILITARY IN THE PUBLIC MIND. WE RECOGNIZE THAT MANY
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GREEKS BLINDLY CLING TO MYTH THAT "FOREIGN FACTOR" IS
CONTROLLING FORCE IN GREEK POLITICAL LIFE, BUT FACT THEY
ACCEPT THIS MYTH, COUPLED WITH STRONG POSSIBILITY GENERAL
SITUATION WILL DETERIORATE--PERHAPS TO POINT OF VIOLENCE--

RAISES SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT OUR FUTURE SECURITY INTERESTS IN GREECE. DIFFICULT QUESTION IS OBVIOUSLY HOW WE SHOULD SEEK TO PRESERVE THESE MOST ESSENTIAL INTERESTS GIVEN COMPLEXITY OF SITUATION, PARTICULARLY IN GREEK ARMY.

2. IT IS THE STATED POLICY OF USG TO REFRAIN FROM ANY DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN THE INTERNAL POLITICS OF GREECE. WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THIS POLICY, HOWEVER, WE CANNOT AVOID CONCERN ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS WHICH IMPINGE UPON OUR BILATERAL SECURITY INTERESTS. OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT THE DISCREDITING OF THE GREEK MILITARY IN THE PUBLIC MIND--A PROCESS WHICH EMBASSY STATES IS "UNQUESTIONABLY ACCELERATING--IS A MATTER WHICH COULD SERIOUSLY AFFECT OUR SECURITY INTERESTS. WE LOOK FORWARD TO DISCUSSING WITH YOU WHETHER IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO CONVEY THIS POINT AT AN EARLY DATE TO KEY SENIOR OFFICERS, EITHER THROUGH YOU, OR PERHAPS, RESPECTED AMERICANS, POSSIBLY SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS, ACTIVE OR RETIRED BUT WHO WOULD NOT BE IN DIRECT POLICY LINE.

3. APPROACH COULD BE ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

A. U.S. INTEREST IN IMPROVING THE STRENGTH AND INTEGRITY OF GREEK ARMED FORCES HAS BEEN CONSTANT FOR OVER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AND HAS BEEN REFLECTED NOT ONLY IN MATERIEL SUPPORT BY UNITED STATES BUT ALSO IN CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN MILITARY PERSONNEL OF BOTH COUNTRIES IN TRAINING AND PLANNING:

B. IN VIEW OF OUR STRONG BELIEF IN THE NEED FOR A STRONG AND EFFECTIVE MILITARY FORCE IN GREECE WE CANNOT HELP BUT FEEL CONCERN ABOUT PRESENT TREND OF DEVELOPMENTS IN GREECE;

C. SPECIFICALLY, GROWING NUMBER OF GREEKS ARE, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, PLACING BLAME FOR COUNTRY'S CURRENT PROBLEMS
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ON GREEK MILITARY;

D. WE ARE, THEREFORE, FEARFUL THAT LONG-STANDING RESPECT AND ADMIRATION FOR GREEK ARMED FORCES IS BEING ERODED IN GREEK POPULACE;

E. WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED THAT FACTIONALISM IN ARMY MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT ITS INTEGRITY AS A MILITARY ORGANIZATION;

F. IT IS AS AN ALLY AND CLOSE FRIEND THAT WE EXPRESS HOPE THAT THESE MATTERS WILL BE RESOLVED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

4. APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS ON APPROACH ALONG THESE

LINES. BROWN

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